

BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE FACT SHEET

SECOND CHANCE ACT REENTRY EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Signed into law in April 2008 and reauthorized in 2018, the Second Chance Act (SCA) aims to enhance public safety by reducing recidivism in and improving outcomes for people returning from prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities to the community. SCA authorizes the awarding of federal grants, aligned with the requirements of the legislation, to eligible entities to provide reentry services and programs, including employment and housing assistance, victim support, and substance abuse treatment. Additionally, SCA funds may be used to support general system improvements.

The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Office of Justice Programs (OJP) funds and administers SCA grants on behalf of adults via the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and on behalf of juveniles via the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. To learn more about SCA, visit: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ199/pdf/PLAW-110publ199.pdf>.

Role of Education and Employment

Over 600,000 individuals return to their communities from prison each year, and an even higher number enter and exit local jails.¹ Each individual has a wide array of needs upon reentry, impacting their likelihood of success. Access to education and employment are common challenges among this population.² Their education level can impact their employability and earning potential, affecting their

ability to provide for themselves and their families.³ Researchers estimate that by 2027, 70 percent of jobs will require a postsecondary degree or credential;⁴ therefore, providing a range of pre- and post-release educational and vocational programs for adults and youth can be critical to improving job opportunities, promoting prosocial peer groups and activities, and lowering the risk of recidivism.

Following are three current SCA investments that support education and employment reentry strategies in 28 states and jurisdictions:

- The **FY 2018 Adult Reentry and Employment Strategic Planning Program (ARES)** supports jurisdictions in developing strategic plans that are comprehensive, collaborative, and multisystemic in their approach. These strategic plans focus on increasing public safety by reducing recidivism and improving employability in people returning to the community from incarceration. Plans include an assessment of the current system and propose solutions to better support individuals in reentry, such as making assessment-driven referrals to ensure their successful transition from correctional facilities to the community. This comprehensive grant program requires intensive partnering and coordination among state, local, and tribal agencies to ensure that people leaving incarceration are connected to the most appropriate reentry and employment services, based on their assessed risk and needs.

¹ E. Ann Carson, December 2021, *Prisoners in 2020 – Statistical Tables*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 302776, <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/p20st.pdf>; and Zhen Zeng and Todd Minton, March 2021, *Jail Inmates in 2019*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 255608, <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/ji19.pdf>.

² National Reentry Resource Center, 2022, *National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction*, retrieved July 25, 2022, from <https://niccc.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/>.

³ Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections, 2021, *Employment Projections*, Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, retrieved July 25, 2022, from <https://www.bls.gov/emp/chart-unemployment-earnings-education.htm>.

⁴ Anthony Carnevale, Nicole Smith, Michael C. Quinn, and Gayle Cinquegrani, forthcoming, *Technology, Jobs, and Education: Projections through 2027*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.



- The **FY 2020 Correctional Adult Reentry Education, Employment, and Recidivism Reduction Strategies Program (CAREERS)** helps state, local, and tribal government agencies and nonprofit organizations implement and expand educational, vocational, and job training programs in their correctional systems. These programs address employment challenges facing youth and adults reentering the community and the workforce after a period of incarceration. Grantees work to improve educational and employment outcomes by implementing new programming and increasing collaboration between educational and workforce service providers and corrections, community supervision providers, and other reentry stakeholders.
- The purpose of the **FY 2021 Adult Reentry Education, Employment, Treatment, and Recovery Program** is to establish, expand, and improve treatment for people with substance use disorders during incarceration and to help facilitate the successful reintegration of people returning to the community after a prison or jail sentence. The program is divided into three categories: (1) Improving Correctional Education, (2) Improving Employment Services and Connections, and (3) Improving Substance Use Treatment Services and Supports for Adults with Substance Use Disorders.

FY 2018 Adult Reentry and Employment Strategic Planning Program (ARES)

Eligibility

State correctional agencies (state departments of corrections, parole, or probation), State Administering Agencies, and federally recognized tribal governments (as determined by the Secretary of the Interior).

Funding Amount

BJA has made 21 awards totaling nearly \$6 million. Grantees received a portion of their total award for the project planning period and received the remainder for implementation. Initial award amounts varied across grantees: 2018 grantees received funding awards of up to \$200,000, and 2019 grantees received awards of up to

\$500,000. Eleven grantees received supplemental awards of up to \$500,000 in 2020 to continue implementing their programs.

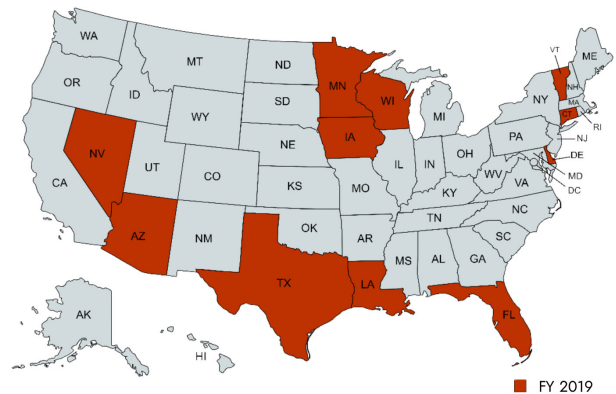
Award Period

36 months.

Allowable Uses of Funds

Funds can be used to support program activities, including establishing a strategic plan for increased system coordination among elected leaders, reentry service providers, corrections, and workforce development and industry stakeholders. Grantees may also allocate funds to aid in data collection or measuring performance indicators such as recidivism, credential and skills attainment, employment, and job retention as well as fund data sharing and the hiring of key program staff.

ARES Grantees



Grantee Highlight

Vermont Department of Corrections (2018) has focused its efforts on consistently: (1) administering criminal justice risk assessments to the incarcerated population, (2) adequately documenting peoples' participation in facility-based services, and (3) ensuring that opportunities are available for the core partners to consistently engage with people pre-release to support their job readiness post-release. Vermont Department of Corrections has implemented job readiness assessments, piloted a

culinary employment training program in the Chittenden Women's Facility, conducted a community pilot in two districts to promote successful reentry into the community, and created an infrastructure to capture and share the employability skills of individuals who work in facilities pre-release. It has successfully launched its two community pilot programs and hopes to use learnings from them to inform a reentry support model that encourages corrections partners to provide hard skills instruction, captures the incarcerated population's vocational education needs, and collects data on skills gained through facility employment.

FY 2020 Correctional Adult Reentry Education, Employment, and Recidivism Education Strategies Program (CAREERRS)

Eligibility

State governments, units of local government, federally recognized tribal governments, nonprofit organizations.

Funding Amount

BJA has made eight awards totaling \$7,200,000 to date under this grant, with a maximum dollar amount of \$900,000 for each award. Grantees received \$100,000 of their total award for their 6-month planning period and the remainder for implementation.

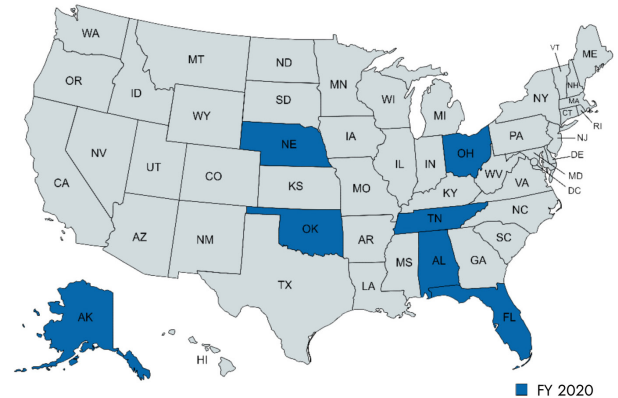
Award Period

36 months.

Allowable Uses of Funds

Funds can be used to support various program activities, such as establishing, improving, or expanding educational programming or career services for incarcerated juveniles and adults; offering transitional services; subsidizing wages or other employment costs; building relationships with local employers in geographic areas to which individuals are likely to return; conducting reentry career planning; training corrections and service provider leadership and staff in CAREERRS programming; and tracking and monitoring employment outcomes.

CAREERRS Grantees



Grantee Highlight

Mobile Area Interfaith Conference (2020) in Alabama has developed the Academy for Career Development to provide individuals returning to the community from the Metro County Jail with mentorship, education, job readiness, training, and employment-related programming services. The program also recruits employers willing to hire formerly incarcerated people and educates them on state and federal incentives for hiring this population. Mobile Area Interfaith Conference had touchpoints with several students pre-release and continues to recruit and enroll students in the Academy for Career Development and partner training programs.

FY 2021 Adult Reentry Education, Employment, Treatment, and Recovery Program

Eligibility

City or township governments, county governments, Native American tribal governments (limited to those federally recognized), nonprofits, and state governments.

Funding Amount

BJA has made 23 awards, anticipating the total award amount to be \$20,700,000 with a maximum of \$900,000 per award. Grantees will receive \$100,000 of their total

award for their 6-month project planning period and receive the remainder for implementation.

Award Period

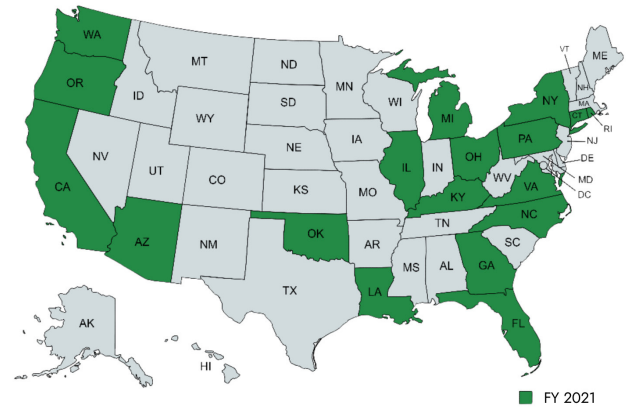
36 months.

Allowable Uses of Funds

The use of funds varies depending on which category the project falls under.

- **Category 1:** Establish, improve, or expand educational and vocational programming and services for incarcerated adults, including competency-based learning, ranging from literacy, high school diploma or equivalent, and postsecondary education to labor market needs-informed vocational education.
- **Category 2:** Establish, improve, or expand career training programs that are informed by labor market needs in the geographic areas to which incarcerated people will return, subsidize wages or other employment costs as part of a career training program, or provide transitional services to assist in the reintegration of people into the community.
- **Category 3:** Continue and improve drug treatment programs (including the provision of medication-assisted treatment) provided at a prison or jail, provide prison-based family treatment to incarcerated parents of minor children or pregnant women, develop and implement programs for people with long-term substance abuse, and strengthen rehabilitation efforts by providing addiction recovery support services.

Grantees



Grantee Highlight

Virginia Department of Corrections (2021) plans to provide a cohesive vocational and reentry program that focuses on the students in five established welding programs by adding a new mobile welding program. The program will be staffed with a qualified welding instructor and a business developer. The business developer's sole purpose will be to develop employer relationships, market the skill sets of people within the program, and develop a formalized process for employers to connect with potential employees. Participants will also receive direct connections to resources and service providers in the community who aid in eliminating barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment. Virginia Department of Corrections is currently in the planning phase of the BJA grant and is strategizing ways to align its reentry efforts and goals with other statewide initiatives, such as Virginia's participation in the U.S. Department of Education's Second Chance Pell Experimental Sites Initiative.

ABOUT BJA

BJA helps America's state, local, and tribal jurisdictions reduce and prevent crime, lower recidivism, and promote a fair and safe criminal justice system. BJA provides a wide range of resources, including grants and funding, training and technical assistance, to law enforcement, courts and corrections agencies, treatment providers, reentry practitioners, justice information sharing professionals, and community-based partners to address chronic and emerging criminal justice challenges nationwide. To learn more about BJA, visit bja.ojp.gov or follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/DOJBJA) and Twitter ([@DOJBJA](https://twitter.com/DOJBJA)). BJA is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs.